

VIRGINIA CITY TOURISM COMMISSION (VCTC)

December 12, 2019 9:00 a.m.

Virginia City Conference Center
10 South E Street, Virginia City, NV 89440

MEETING MINUTES

Notice: Items on the agenda may be taken out of order; two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration; and items may be removed from the agenda or discussion relating thereto delayed at any time. This is the tentative schedule for the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to take items in a different order to accomplish business in the most efficient manner.

The following minutes are a summarized explanation of the topics discussed. A taped recording of these proceedings will be kept for review.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson C. DeGasperis called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. ROLL CALL

Leah Kruse called roll.

Chairperson: Corrado DeGasperis
Vice Chair: Lance Gilman – Absent
Treasurer: Vanessa Stephens
Board Members: Angelo Petrini
Ron Gallagher
A. Perry - Via phone

L. Kruse noted there was a quorum present.

Others: Deny Dotson, Director
Katie Demuth, Tourism & Marketing Manager
Leah Kruse, Administrative Specialist

2. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

This is the tentative schedule for the meeting. The Commission reserves the right to take items in a different order to accomplish business in the most efficient manner. The Commission may combine two or more items for consideration and may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the agenda.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

3. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- 14 November 2019

A. Petrini made the motion to approve the minutes.

Second – R. Gallagher

Approved – Unanimously

4. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

Discussion may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the Chairman. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this portion of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken.

Judy Cohen, Storey County business owner, stated that plows should not be depositing snow on C Street in front of the businesses as it makes it hard to shovel the boardwalks. A. Petrini shared that in the past, NDOT used to remove snow and not just shovel it out of the road and onto the sidewalks. D. Dotson said that he will bring this issue up at the next county meeting. N. Barde asked if ice melt was allowed to be used on the boardwalks. D. Dotson and K. Demuth shared that it is used at the Visitor Center.

C. DeGasperis shared that he set up a new company called Sierra Springs Opportunity Fund and they have a unique interest in continued restorations of Silver Springs and all of Storey County. C. DeGasperis would like to have one of his partners present the business at a future VCTC board meeting.

D. Dotson shared that Storey County Public Works was out this morning hanging the new skyline lights over C Street.

5. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: FINANCIAL UPDATE

- A. *Tourism Tax Report*
- B. *Transient Lodging Tax Report*

D. Dotson shared the Tourism Tax Report, which is up to \$150,700. D. Dotson stated that the funds will just have to be watched to see if the trend continues to be upward. J. Cohen asked if there was a way to differentiate how much money was coming from each zip code. D. Dotson stated that it might be possible in the future as there is a new zip code to monitor.

D. Dotson shared that Transient Lodging was up about \$2,000. Nicole Barde asked if the room tax report could be used to figure out the divide in Tourism Tax dollars. N. Barde said that it seems possible to do so with the new zip code. J. Cohen stated that sales were better before TRI was built and that the numbers from that time may help with figuring out the division of tax numbers. C. DeGasperis stated that Virginia City needs continued attention and support as funds come in from TRI.

D. Dotson shared budget sheet from the last fiscal year. D. Dotson stated that the VCTC had a budget of approximately 1.452 million and the expense budget was 1.416 million. D. Dotson said that the budget number was missing a couple of state grants and some funds in holding accounts. D. Dotson shared that the final expense number was approximately 300,000 under. D. Dotson reminded everyone that the numbers he just reported are not audited. N. Barde asked where the VCTC is in the process of getting the new accounting system to work properly. D. Dotson said that the VCTC is working hard to get the process more streamlined and accurate. D. Dotson shared that anyone is welcome to come to his office to go over the budget.

6. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF INTERLOCAL CONTRACT BETWEEN THE STATE OF NEVADA DIVISION OF TOURISM AND THE VCTC

D. Dotson said that it came to his attention that Virginia City being rewarded the opportunity to host next year's Rural Roundup needed to be formally approved by the board.

R. Gallagher made the motion to approve the interlocal contract between the State of Nevada Division of Tourism and the VCTC.

Second – A. Petrini

Approved – Unanimously

7. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: MARKETING UPDATES

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies, shared numerous marketing updates that included the brochures for Christmas on the Comstock, a piece on Travel Channel's website regarding the best small cities to visit for Christmas, a new video for Hauntober, and a three-feature series with KOLO Channel 8.

8. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: SPECIAL EVENT UPDATES

Jess Horning, Liquid Blue Events, provided an update on Christmas on the Comstock and expressed his pleasure with the businesses in town who participated in the first weekend that there were many people in town despite the terrible weather later in the afternoon. Christine Verrier, Liquid Blue Events, shared that a young mother from Fallon won one of the \$500 shopping sprees. J. Cohen stated that no one that came in to her store had an event map. J. Horning stated that will be one of the changes over the next weekend – maps will be handed out ahead of time. J. Cohen commented that most of her customers over the weekend were locals. D. Dotson shared that the marketing was focused on Carson City and Reno. Jeff Wood, resident, suggested that maps of town be printed and that they be available to merchants to purchase to hand out in their stores. A. Perry said that the shuttle was a wonderful addition to the event and that she would like to see that utilized during all events. **CLARIFICATION:** A. Perry would like to see the shuttle utilized at all major events. A. Perry stated that a few people she talked to seemed confused by the event and that several did not like the size/bulk of the ornaments that were handed out. A. Perry also said that she would love to see a contest to design a Virginia City ornament next year. **CLARIFICATION:** A. Perry stated that she would like to see Saint Mary's Art Center run a contest to design a Virginia City ornament next year.

D. Dotson shared an updated, but still tentative, 2020 Event Calendar. J. Wood suggested that Virginia City businesses take charge and make the Saturday after Thanksgiving a Small Business Saturday event. J. Cohen suggested not moving the Christmas parade date around. K. Demuth said that a major reason for the change is to avoid competition with all of the other parades in the area.

J. Cohen suggested printing a large map to display at the Visitor Center that people can take pictures of (instead of carrying around a paper map).

9. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: GROUPS, FAMS, TRADE SHOWS, AND VISITOR CENTER UPDATE

K. Demuth shared that groups are at 4,089 through the end of December, which is a large jump from the previous year, which is a result of networking at conferences, attending new conferences, and having better tracking in place. K. Demuth shared that the conference she just attended in Fort Worth, TX will be in Reno next November and that the attendees will have a chance to come to Virginia City.

K. Demuth shared that in 2017, from July through October, the total visitors that came into the Visitor Center was 18,000. K. Demuth shared that the number in 2018 was just over 29,000 and 28,000 in 2019.

K. Demuth said that there is still a lot of back-end work being done on Rural Roundup and everything is progressing smoothly.

10. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: PIPER'S OPERA HOUSE UPDATE

Whitney Brunson, Piper's Opera House, provided an update on Piper's, highlights include some TV interviews that are helping to drive ticket sales, the opening show of Comstock Christmas Carol had 160 pre-sale tickets and 10 at the door, the Roaring 20s New Year's Eve party is sold out, and weddings are booking all the way out to 2021. D. Dotson said that every event is translating into room nights in town.

11. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: STAFF REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE & FUTURE MEETINGS

D. Dotson did not have a Director's Report to share. L. Kruse stated that the next VCTC Board meeting will be Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 9:00 am.

12. CHAIRPERSON C. DEGASPERIS BROUGHT THE NEXT ITEM TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION: ADJOURNMENT OF COMMISSION BOARD MEETING

Chairperson C. DeGasperi adjourned the meeting at 10:35 am.